

(d) the next further steps taken for the proper exploration of oil and gas in that basin?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) In Mahanadi Basin the consortium of Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Gas Authority of India Ltd. (GAIL) has been awarded shallow water block MN-OSN-97/3 for oil exploration under the first round of the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP-I). Additionally, ONGC, on its own has been awarded one deep water block MN-DWN-98/3 under NELP-I in Mahanadi Basin. The contracts for both the blocks mentioned in reply to (a) above were signed on 12.4.2000.

(b) and (c) The preliminary exploration work including the study and analysis of existing data is under progress and the work relating to seismic survey will be taken up soon.

(d) One more block MN-DWN-98/2 in Mahanadi Basin has been awarded and the contract signed on 12.4.2000 to the consortium of Reliance Industries Ltd., India and Niko Resources, Canada under NELP-I. Three more blocks in Mahanadi Basin are on offer under the second round of NELP, out of which two blocks are in shallow waters Offshore and one block in Onland area.

Exploration of New Oil Resources

654. SHRI VED PRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that only 25 percent of the prognosticated oil resources have been discovered over a period of 100 years and self reliance in oil is reducing over the years till date;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that inspite of respected offers for exploration in sedimentary Basins very little interest has been shown by international oil companies or Indian private sector to explore in the virgin basins; and

(d) the strategy of Government to tackle this situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) As on 1.4.2000 prognosticated resources are 28,090 Million Metric Tonnes (MMT) while the established in-place geological reserves of country are estimated at 6851.57 MMT.

(b) (i) Hydrocarbon resource prognostication is carried out to assess the potential of a basin, the methodology for which is highly data dependent and therefore the resources assessed are subjective. The prognosticated resources as also the in-place discovered reserves, generally increase with time as more and more geo-scientific knowledge is gathered about the basins. Continuous exploratory efforts by National/Private E&P companies have resulted in increasing the number of basins which are likely to be Hydrocarbon bearing.

(ii) The indigenous oil production of the country is almost stagnant during the last 10-12 years, whereas the demand for the same is increasing.

(c) In comparison with the moderate response in earlier rounds, under the first round of New Exploration Licensing policy (NELP), 45 bids were received for 27 of the 48 blocks offered, out of which 25 blocks have been awarded to Foreign and Indian companies.

(d) In order to further encourage exploration in Indian basins, Government have recently announced the second round of NELP under which 25 blocks have been offered.

Filling up of senior level posts in Oil PSUs

655. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of senior level posts in oil PSUs including Director (Operations) in ONGC and CMD, GAIL are lying vacant for a long time; if so, the details of all such vacancies;

(b) whether Prime Minister's office has been convinced to fill up these posts urgently. If so, the details of bottlenecks involved; and

(c) what has been the response of Prime Minister's Officer on these vacancies?